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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editors are not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. Letters should not exceed 250 words in length and should be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

"COWBIRDS"

DEAR EDITOR: I am one of the "urban sisters who missed the joys of bird-nesting." I have, however, traveled widely in this country and I have seen nursing organizations and administrations "from the coast of Maine to the coast of California." Undoubtedly, in a profession as large as ours, there are a great many cowbirds, but as an advertisement of a popular morning beverage states, "There's a reason." Our nursing organizations, national, state and local, have gotten into a serious rut of being, what one might call, undemocratic; and parallel to the phrase "once a cowbird, always a cowbird," could be voiced by the younger nurses of the organization, "once a president or an officer of a national, state, or local organization, always a president. . . etc." There are some birds in the nursing profession who do give birth to ideas which they would like to hatch and feed and develop, but there is no nest vacant for them in which to lay their eggs and they must forsooth lay them in the nest of the ever-setting president, etc., and I am sorry to say that after the birds are hatched, even though they be little cowbirds, the little red identifying tips on their wings are destroyed so that even the mother who gave birth to the idea and did not have the opportunity to hatch it, is denied the further opportunity of nursing it and developing it.

I think the time has definitely come when the older members of our profession must recognize that they do not, like the judges of our superior courts, ascend the bench for life. Every person, no matter how lowly, aspires to public recognition and appreciation of service rendered or experience gained, and it is not fair to the younger nurses of the profession generally, to allow these sole proprietorships to go on forever. All over the country there is murmuring among the rank and file that there is such a limited space at the top and that a selected few get all the honors. Of course the statement is constantly being made that So and So has developed the organization and that there is nobody else to

take her place. This, it seems to me, is a marked weakness which runs through our ranks and is reflected in the work we do in hospitals, public health nurse organizations, et cetera. Over and over again we see pieces of work go to smash because they have been absolutely built up by individuals who were not big enough to develop understudies. This might be a very good time for the American Nurses' Association to take stock of the various state and local organizations and find out once and for all why we have cowbirds, why we continue to have cowbirds, and how we can exterminate cowbirds.

Washington

ANN DOYLE

WHY SHE GAVE UP NIGHT DUTY

DEAR EDITOR:

My patients have told me I snore,
A fact I most sadly deplore;
For myself I can't weep,
For I am asleep;
It's the ones I wake up that get sore.

New York

L. M.

FIRES OF VARIOUS KINDS IN KOREA

DEAR EDITOR: Yesterday there were two fires at our hospital, one in the morning and one in the evening. The first was one which is kindled by that "unruly member." One nurse lent her ring to a probationer who left it in a basin of water. Another nurse threw water and ring away at the same time, and you may guess the rest. There were tears, and angry words, and many unworthy feelings to be soothed and corrected. As they all sat down to supper, I hesitated before going to the house for my supper for fear the clash would begin again. Just as I sat down to the table, the church bell began ringing for evening service and in a few moments the "Come to church, come to church," sound rang out into the "tang, tang, tang," of a fire alarm. I sprang to the window to see where. To my horror the flames were licking high above the roof of our hospital! The first glance made me think of the wood